THE DEWAN'S STATEMENT.

DEWAN: Under Rule 68 (4), I proceed to make a statement on the Budget that has been presented to-day at the Joint meeting of the two Houses of the Travancore Legislature.

Before I proceed to do so, it is my duty to tender thanks on behalf of the Travancore Government and I feel sure on behalf of the honourable Houses of the Travancore Legislature, to His Excellency the Crown Representative and to Mr. Skrine for the cordial and continuous help that has been rendered to this Government in many directions during the past year.

In the course of the speech of the Financial Secretary to which we have listened with pleasure, and I trust with profit. we have had indications of the diverse ways in which the Government of India's help has been manifested. In the matter of the Railways, there was a longstanding question about interest which, on account of the intercession and the good offices of the Resident, was settled to our satisfaction and to our advantage. With regard to customs and the pre-payment of 90 per cent. of the anticipated yearly share in regard to the Cochin Harbour, there again, the Government of India was most helpful and their assistance has to be gratefully acknowledged.

In this connection I may say that there was a rumour set afloat some time ago of those tendencious statements which often appear in newspapers to the effect that the Government of India had issued an ultimatum that unless we paid certain monies they would take steps to deprive us of our share of the Harbour Revenues. I am glad to say that the relations of the Government of India and the Travancore Government are such that ultimata on the one side or on the other are incredible and impossible.

In regard to the question of minting our own coins I must also gratefully acknowledge the valuable assistance that was given to us by the Government of India in recognising the 'Chitra' coins to be unlimited tender. Many years ago, our coins were unlimited tender. But during the last 25 or 30 years or even for a longer period they were limited tender and the result was that we were unable to take advantage of the minting which every Sovereign State has as one of its main prerogatives and to obtain the profits from that minting. Thanks to the good offices of the Government of India and to Mr. Skrine especially, we were able to get that difficulty removed and we are entitled to mint up to an unlimited extent 'Chitra' coins;

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and as you will see from the speech to which we have listened, we propose to mint a certain amount of 'Chitra' coins next year as was done in the previous year.

Finally, with regard to the arrangements connected with telephones the Government of India have rendered us much help. I now turn to the budget proper.

Let me in the first instance congratulate the Financial Secretary on the lucidity and the thoroughness of his treatment of this complicated subject. It is a pity that Mr. Rengaswamy Iyer is not with us to-day as his health has not been satisfactory. But it is hoped that he will be restored to normal health very soon and rejoin his work. I am glad to say that his *locum tenens*, Mr. Ramachandra Rao and thereafter Mr. Cherian, performed their task with laudable expedition and with an efficiency which the Government acknowledged with pleasure. As will be noticed from the document that has been placed before the Houses of the Legislature, we are budgeting for a surplus. As is observed by Mr. Cheriyan, this budget is a conservative Budget. Deliberately the amount of income has been put down as low as possible, notwithstanding that we feel convinced that at the end of the next year, we shall not have less than Rs. 265 lakhs by way of revenue. But in order to provide against all contingencies, the Budget figure has been put at about Rs. 261 lakhs. In this connection, it may be useful to remember that the annual revenue of Hydrabad State is Rs. 817 lakhs, that of Mysore is Rs. 351 lakhs and there is no other State in India which is getting as much by way of annual Revenue as Travancore is budgeting for. In revenue as well as in population, therefore, we rank next to Hyderabad and Mysore amongst the Indian States and in future discussions and in allotting the place due to this State in the confraternity of States I trust that adequate notice will be taken of these factors. It may be remarked in passing that this increase in Revenue has been really Rs. 20 lakhs in the past two years and it was effected without a single pie of additional taxation. The object of raising the revenue is however not for the pleasure of doing so but for the purpose of securing the greatest good to the greatest number and enhancing the prosperity of the State. And the policy of this Government is not to allow Government balances to accumulate for their own sake, but to utilise them as far as possible in productive works and not to allow them to fetch little or no interest. It is well known that the utmost interest that we can get for our

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balances if kept in cash is not more than two per cent. In certain banks it is less than two per cent and in certa n other banks it is two per cent. or at the most 2½ per cent. We cannot generally get more than two per cent. for our monies by investment in banks. Therefore it is a great pity and a great mistake to keep our monies locked up without putting them into remunerative schemes wherefrom we may derive more advantageous results.

Speaking generally, there is no doubt that so far as agriculture is concerned there is a world slump. Having bestowed some attention to this subject and having studied much of the literature on the matter, I may say that it is very very doubtful indeed whether the world slump, apart from extraordinary causes, will improve in the immediate future. A Committee constituted by League of Nations which has been bestowing considerable attention to this subject has published brochures dealing with the matter in which rather pessimistic forebodings occur with regard to the possibilities of what may be called agricultural revival. Now there is no gainsaying the fact that in this State agriculture is in a very depressed condition. As a matter of fact, Government have been considering during the last year, and I am afraid will have to consider during the coming year, certain schemes of agricultural relief to the people who are toiling on the land. Remissions have been made last year and I am afraid demands for remission and other reliefs which cannot be neglected will be made this year and there will arise also certain specific demands as to relief exigible by certain localities which cannot be longer delayed. We shall hear more of this when the actual demands come up for voting. But the general policy is as follows. Government realise that agriculture as it has been pursued in the State is not going to be much of a profitable occupation. By agriculture I mean agriculture conducted on the old methods and in the old way. It has therefore become incumbent on the State to devise new methods of agricultural operation and concentrate on new kinds of crops. Therefore it is that last year I said and this year I repeat that it will be the duty of every one interested in the prosperity and well-being of the State to devise means whereby commercial crops can be substituted to as large an extent as practicable for the existing crops and the cultivation of Soya bean, tobacco and sugar-cane have to be investigated and scrutinised with the utmost possible care in order that agriculture might become a remunerative occupation. Intensive scientific methods and the substitution of commercial crops must be included in our programme. The Travancore Government

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have been concentrating in South Travancore on the stoppage of the registry of tank beds and the improvement of irrigation sources, having regard to the undoubted fact and the inescapable circumstance that the Pechipara Dam and the Reservoir have ceased to fulfil the expectations that were originally raised and entertained regarding it; and as to South Travancore other plans are also under consideration. The initiation of the Credit Bank is one of the essential requisities for agricultural rehabilitation and it is to be hoped that it will start successful operations very shortly.

Now, the point I wish to make, and make very strongly, is that, so far as the future of Travancore is concerned, reliance will have to be placed in order to sustain Governmental operations, and in order that the Government of Travancore can continue in its traditions of progressiveness, not so much on land revenue but on other items of income-producing activities and other taxes and imposts. From that point of view it is the object and aim of the Travancore Government to try and raise revenue in other ways, for example, by tightening up income tax rules and by devising other means which, without operating harshly upon the individual inhabitant of Travancore, will yield substantial revenue to the Government.

In this respect, Travancore is in a very different position from practically all the rest of India. Take, for example, the Madras Government. Till recently, they had a total annual income, or revenue of about Rs. 16 crores of which more than between fifty and sixty per cent. they derived from Land Revenue and Excise. Travancore on the other hand, has a total annual revenue of about Rs. 2½ crores of which about Rs. 40 lakhs is contributed by Land Revenue. Therefore, we are in a better position than other parts of India in the matter of relying for our Governmental activities on sources of income other than Land Revenue. There is no doubt that hereafter we shall have to rely less and less upon land until the agriculturists of the country take to intensive cultivation and to improved and scientific methods and commercial crops. The future of Land Revenue and its incidence are therefore engaging the anxious attention of Government.

So far as our income-tax is concerned, Government now feel that there is complete justification for the reorganisation of the department, to which reference was made last year. Now speaking only of one concern, let me point out the tremendous

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difference in the amount of income-tax which it paid in the year 1112 and the amount it paid in the year 1113. In the year 1112, it paid a sum of Rs. 7,645-4 as. plus Rs. 6,774 by way of income-tax plus super-tax; and in 1113, the same concern has paid an income-tax of Rs. 31,000 and super tax of Rs. 11,000. Similarly, in the case of other concerns also, income-tax and super tax have doubled and more than doubled. I am mentioning this only for the purpose of showing what result can be produced by careful scrutiny of income-tax appraisement. Such facts also demonstrate that the State is entitled to demand and to get really much more by way of income-tax and super tax than it has been getting hitherto. It has been clearly shown that with the fuller and better realisation of their objectives they have been able to secure for the Government a bigger income under income-tax than they used to in the past.

In this connection, it is my duty to pay a tribute to the fine work done by Mr. K. C. Venkatarama Iyer, who has now returned to Madras after finishing his work here. There is no doubt that, in the reorganisation of the department, a certain amount of very good work has been done by the department itself under the existing chiefs. But that Mr. Venkatarama Iyer's assistance was invaluable would be gratefully acknowledged by none more readily than by those chiefs of the department here.

I now turn to the Cochin Harbour. It is now quite clear that our participation in that enterprise has more than justified itself. On account of the separation of Burma from India, as has been pointed out in the Budget Speech, the receipts of the Harbour in respect of petrol have greatly swelled the pool and we are likely to get hereafter never less than about Rs. 20 lakhs every year. I do not wish to say more than this, namely, that, considering that at the most we shall not have spent more than about Rs. 1¼ crores on the venture, an annual income for all time of Rs. 20 lakhs is not bad regarded merely as an investment.

But I must refer also to one aspect of the matter which must be borne in mind with regard to the current year's decrease in import revenue at the Cochin Harbour. The Government of India embarked on the policy of protection of Indian sugar. With a view to stimulate local production of sugar, the Government of India imposed prohibitive duties against Java sugar which was being imported into India in large quantities. That has been the real reason for our loss of revenue in the year. But that is more than compensated by the decision in regard to

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petrol, and certain other matters also on which decision is pending. It is hoped that from next year onwards we shall never get an income of less than Rs. 20 lakhs by way of customs exclusive of our own collections.

I now turn to the general policy of the State with regard to State enterprises, especially in view of the misunderstanding and misconception in some quarters about the policy of the Government in spite of the explanation I tried to give last year. Let me once more make the position perfectly clear. The object and aim of the Travancore Government will be not to compete with but to encourage private enterprise, private enterprise meaning enterprise which, for its success and fruition, depends upon commercial acumen, advertisement and the various other expedients which commercial men have necessarily to adopt to ensure commercial success. In other words the State's main function is to let trade and manufacture remain under private management and control. Government, in the nature of things, cannot conduct commercial concerns adequately. On the other hand the duty and the function of the State will also be to make the utmost use of certain things which are or should be State monopolies. Let me illustrate.

Take the case of timber, for instance. Travancore produces a large variety of useful timber and in greater abundance than most other places. That is a natural monopoly of the State. Let me point out that for the last 25 years, we were getting a particular rate of royalty of four annas per cubic foot, in regard to certain varieties of timber sold by us. We were so doing not because of any cussedness on our part, but because we did not know the real value of what the State possessed. The expert, about whose entertainment different opinions have been expressed,—an expert chosen for his skill by the Government of India and whose opinions are now followed by many Governments outside India—was brought over here. Within some weeks of his coming here, all those rates were revised and exactly double those rates were cheerfully given by the very firms which had been paying for many years the old rates. So that, in the course of the first month of his arrival here, he was able to show a clear profit of many thousands and as a matter of fact, if his schemes for the utilisation of the timber of the State are put into proper shape and lead to fruition, it is expected that instead of the Forest revenue of about Rs. 13 lakhs, we shall get a revenue of about Rs. 18 to 19 lakhs, in the course of two years, if not in the course of one year. I am leaving out of account

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the question of building of bridges and structures of that kind. On that matter, as there is apparently difference of opinion, let me enunciate the policy of the State. This State does not now produce cement though it hopes to do so. This state does not produce steel. We have to import our steel and our cement. We do not propose to do so unless we are compelled to do so. We shall, as far as possible, substitute wood and timber for those articles. Let us concede, if necessary, that wood and timber are not so durable as steel structures and cement structures. Very well, we will renew them at the end of 20 years or even earlier. The timber is ours and with proper care is an inexhaustible source of supply. It is State labour that is employed. The profit that is derived from it goes to the State. This is the policy of the Government and that policy will be adhered to as far as practicable as to bridges and piers and similar ventures.

Take another matter. For years, mineral licenses were granted by the State. Whole areas have been leased. What did we find? We found that there was a tremendous amount of buying and selling of lands and speculative applications for mineral licenses. We came to the conclusion that this kind of thing must stop and that the State must derive an adequate revenue, an adequate share of the profits which these people are making. I have before me a very instructive pamphlet published by our Ceramic expert with regard to Sillimanite which is one of the concomitants of Ilmenite sand that we have here. It is now used as an element preferable to porcelain in the matter of electrical goods. So far as this is concerned we do not know its real commercial value. The production and marketting of Ilmenite and sillimanite are in the hands of a world combine. Until the facts are ascertained and our fair share of profits secured the Government do not propose to hand over any of the mineral resources to prospectors. Of course we are bound to honour the contracts that have already been entered into, we are bound to carry out in the spirit and in the letter the contracts which are existent. No new licenses will be given to anybody unless Government after investigation are able to see what are the net profits which the venture can bring and what is the proper share which Government migh obtain from that amount. This policy again is in furtherance of the idea that these being natural monopolies of the State, these must be exploited to the best advantage and the State must get the best profit out of it.

Take again the case of other minerals. We now find that Travancore mica which is of the crimson variety is supposed to be better for the purpose of electrical goods than the mica which

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is elsewhere found in India and which is of the greenish variety. Therefore there have been demands from outside on account of the various re-armament and other programmes elsewhere, for this kind of mica. There has been demand for graphite which is also found here. Therefore Government have come to the conclusion that these are things which ought not to be handed over to any private enterprise but that the State should exploit these resources for the profit of the State. Thus in regard to the natural monopolies of the State, like timber, like the mineral resources, we should exploit them for our own benefit exclusively. If we cannot conduct business on proper lines ourselves, we may have to hand them over to people who will do so but on taking a proper share of the profit, never less than 10 per cent. and in certain cases going up higher still.

I come now to the State Transport Department. There has been a tremendous amount of confusion of thought and conflict of opinion about it. So far as the financial aspect is concerned, it is not open to controversy any longer, I am happy to say. Let me recapitulate or review the position. We have spent on the whole less than Rs. 7 lakhs. We are now negotiating—those negotiations are practically complete—with the Kannan Devan Hills Produce Company for taking all their tea and transporting that tea to Cochin, thereby helping the port of Cochin and a sister State. Let us realise exactly what the position is to-day. The Kannan Devan Hills Produce Company sends all its tea by ropeway down to Bodi. From Bodi it is put into railway wagons and taken to Tuticorin and exported from Tuticorin to Europe. The idea is that hereafter that ropeway will be given up and that tea will go through Travancore territory to Alwaye and from Alwaye it will be put into the steamer at Cochin by our Transport system. We are negotiating for this and those negotiations have practically been completed. Then, the inhabitants of these plantations themselves, the coolies and the labourers working there, require provisions, rice, tamarind and such other articles. All these will be taken from Alwaye to Munnar and thence to the plantations of the K. D. H. P. Company, instead of being brought by the ropeway from British India. In other words, we shall be the sole transporting agents for taking tea from Munnar to Alwaye and from Alwaye to Cochin, and provisions from Alwaye back to Munnar. Now, we expect an income of about Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 lakhs in this direction from the year after the next.

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I may also inform the House that, having learnt of this scheme, similar proposals have been made by other companies; and, as a matter of fact, one of such proposals is now before the Government.

Now, leaving on one side this contract with the K. D. H. P. Company which has not yet been signed although the preliminaries are all over, we are bound to get between 5 and 6 lakhs of rupees every year under our transport scheme by way of gross income. Out of that 6 lakhs, deduct 50 per cent. for overhead charges and other expenses; that leaves us 3 lakhs. Out of that again, let us deduct Rs. 1 lakh for the maintenance of the road, because hereafter all roads covered by the transport scheme will be maintained out of the receipts from that scheme and not from the allotment for the P. W. D. This leaves 2 lakhs. Again, out of the balance of Rs. 2 lakhs, deduct Rs. 1 lakh for depreciation and Rs. 1/4 lakh for contingencies. That leaves us a net profit of 3/4 or one lakh of rupees per annum. Certainly, an annual income of Rs. 1 lakh for a total expenditure of Rs. 7 lakhs does not constitute a bad investment. Even if these calculations are wrong by 50 per cent. still we get half a lakh of rupees per year for Rs. 7 lakhs, that is nearly 7 per cent.

Now, what does this mean? It means either that till now somebody has been getting all that profit without the State deriving practically anything out of such profit, or that hitherto the venture was being run in such a wasteful manner or under cut-throat competition that nobody could get any profit. Indeed, it is the latter explanation that has been furnished to the Government in answer to the demand for income-tax. It was said that no single Transport Company got any profit because of competition, cutting of rates and reduction of fares; and therefore instead of paying legitimate income-tax to the Government, some even claimed preferential treatment and remissions. The net result, as I have already pointed out, is a minimum annual return of 10 per cent. or at least 7 out of the Transport Scheme. Certainly, this is a means of securing revenue without increasing the burden on the agriculturists or on anybody else. It is a perfectly legitimate form of profit and it may be incidently observed, has been taken great advantage of by such institutions as the London County Council.

Let me next take up the Ceramic Factory. There used to be a series of questions every year with regard to that factory. We have spent so far less than Rs. 6 lakhs. This factory

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serves an area of thirty-five square miles which is packed with China Clay. The supply, it is hoped, will be practically unlimited for the next fifty or sixty years. I am glad to be able to announce to the House that there are competitive tenders at attractive rates for all the Refined China Clay that we can supply; big concerns have come forward with the offer to buy all the China Clay that our factory can produce. The only question is which offer we are to accept. It is expected that, even in the first year, we shall get a lakh of rupees. Our China Clay is supposed to be better than most other Textile Clay in the world. So, for an investment of Rs. 6 lakhs, we shall get year after year a lakh of rupees.

Turning next to the Hydro-Electric Project, it is my duty to allay certain doubts and apprehensions which have been raised. I can tell you definitely from my own inspection that the trouble now with the Power House is not that the foundations are weak but that they are too strong. We have found a bed of solid rock on which Power House is now being constructed. The difficulty was to dynamite that rock and start building. The foundations are laid and the work is proceeding apace and, as pointed out in the Budget speech, in the course of the next 6 or 7 months, certainly before 9 months are out, the machinery will be installed and the current will begin to be supplied. We have budgeted for an income of a lakh of rupees next year. I may mention my own experience with regard to the Pykara Scheme, as to which also as in the case of certain large scale contracts here there were very strong allegations made against the originator of the scheme which was my humble self and against others working under me, firstly for handing over all the contracts to foreign firms, secondly for getting commissions in regard to the contracts and thirdly for other nefarious practices. But I am glad to tell you that on Rs. 3½ crores invested by the Madras Government on that scheme they are getting an annual revenue of Rs. 27 lakhs. The rate of interest which the Mysore Government makes is also 9 to 10 per cent. every year on their Hydro-Electric enterprises. It is a known fact that so far as the Hydro-Electric schemes are concerned, from the second year of their working they never pay less than 9 or 10 per cent. interest. The enterprise is well on its way. There have been difficulties and there have been troubles in the beginning—no big enterprise of that kind can get on without troubles and snags—but they have all been overcome and I am glad to announce to the joint House that from the close of the

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next year we shall begin to make income out of it. The Trivandrum Electric Supply has also done very well.

I now come to the other kind of enterprises, namely, commercial enterprises. With regard to these enterprises the position stands thus. The Rubber Factory was leased by this Government to a firm. The Rubber factory is not working to-day. The Government have therefore absolutely no responsibility for its working. It is run by a Travancore Limited Company. What happened was this. We leased the factory for a monthly rent of Rs. 2,205. We sold our stock to them for a lakh of rupees. There is a very big market all over India for the produce of that Rubber Factory. They are admitted to be first rate in quality. Their machinery is admitted to be adequate for the purpose. But the only thing that is lacking is—and I am saying so with all possible respect—commercial organisation, advertising skill and financial facilities. These are things which no Government can supply and therefore those persons who are now in charge of the Rubber Factory are themselves endeavouring to obtain these requisites from elsewhere and I hope very shortly the Factory will begin to run, because a great deal of rubber is required for our own purposes including the Transport Scheme. As a matter of fact, if they confine themselves only to making cycle tubes and inner tubes for motor cars and buses, they might make a profit of the concern provided that their marketing arrangements are good.

So far as the Tincture Factory is concerned, I am glad to say that Government have already received Rs. 5 lakhs being the consideration for their handing over the Tincture Factory to a company which again is a Travancorean concern. The company has been formed in Travancore. A large number of shares of that company have been taken by Travancoreans and it will be found that so far as that company is concerned there is no difficulty about commercial skill or advertising. It will begin to pay dividends very shortly as honourable members will see for themselves. The Paper Factory is also run under efficient management.

Now the policy as to these private concerns is that Government do not want to take a hand in running them. Government will only run what may be called the natural monopolies and concerns which are in the nature of monopolies, like the Commercial Transport and electrical production.

Investigations are now in progress for the purpose of using some of our soft woods to produce rayon for the manufacture of

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artificial silk from which pure Travancore Khadar—made of yarn produced in Travancore, spun here and woven here—can be made available for the people of Travancore. Travancore does not produce cotton, and possibly she cannot produce the best varieties here; and in this respect we are faced with the same difficulty as Japan. She had to import all her cotton. She tried substitutes and has successfully made use of her timber resources which are very extensive.

As I said, investigations are now proceeding for the production of rayon, and if, with the ramification of our hydro-electric project, we succeed in bringing into existence a net work of cottage textile industries, throughout the State, the results will be tremendous.

I now come to the University. Nothing in the shape of re-orientation in the industrialisation of the State is possible unless the whole ideal and the whole programme of education are also re-oriented. And, it is in order to bring about that result that the University has been started, and will be worked. Criticisms have been heard. I have heard that a certain number of students have been asked not to join the University or to boycott it. As a matter of fact the effect of it will be that those students who do not join the University will be at a positive disadvantage in the matter of recruitment to public service, for naturally Travancore undergraduates and graduates will be more in demand than others in all varieties of service—public, industrial and commercial. But I feel sure that these threats and prognostications will not materialise. The University is formulating a programme to work on its own lines with its own agencies. It is an essentially national organisation which the people can make or mar. I feel confident that the people will make it a great institution for the progress and advancement of the country and for the spread of the right type of education physical, intellectual and aesthetic.

Speaking of the University, I am reminded of the large number of interpellations about the importation of foreigners into the State service. Criticisms have been heard with specific reference to the entertainment of Mr. Kamesam, Dr. Parameswaran, Dr. Cousins and other experts. My only answer to such criticisms is this. The last people in the world who should agitate on those lines are the people of Travancore; because Travancore talent, Travancore energy and Travancore enterprise are being used all the world over, and if cries of that

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kind are heard and resound, it is very likely that we may meet retaliation from other parts of the world. We may be faced with the query 'why should we entertain Travancoreans when Travancore is not prepared to tolerate any foreigner?' That is the real danger in local and provincial exclusiveness.

I may make it clear in this connection that it is not the intention or the object of the Government to entertain non-Travancoreans in service unless and to the extent to which it is essential for the development of some Governmental programme or policy. It is certainly not the object of the Government to make Travancore a kind of refuge for people who cannot get employment elsewhere. If experts have to be found for any particular scheme they must be got down from wherever they can be found. That is the policy of this Government.

Finally, let me add that the resources of the country are manifold, so that, in the deliberate opinion of the Travancore Government, if a wise policy of industrialisation and of intensive agricultural operations is conducted and if there is a background of proper educational training, the revenues of the State can easily go up by Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 lakhs in the next four or five years. And, the revenue will be raised not for its own sake merely, but for the purpose of the common good of the people of the country, for ensuring the inauguration of ameliorative and beneficial schemes, for getting the utmost advantage from the intellectual and physical assets available to the State. There might be differences as to political objectives. There are bound to be such all the world over. But in the matter of industrial, agricultural and educational programmes and policies, there is no room for acerbity of temper and no real reason for conflicts. There is no place for animositics. There is room *only* for friendliness, comradeship and co-operation. May we all work in that spirit.

The Joint Sitting terminated at 12-35 p.-m.

A. GUNAMONY,

Secretary to the Sri Chitra State Council.

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